

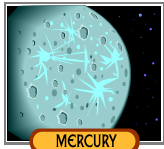


As the 2012 New Year breaks, look for 3 of our 4 closest planetary neighbors. The dazzling "evening star", Venus will be in the west at sunset, with Jupiter, not quite as bright, high in the south at the same hour. Reddish Mars rises in the east around 11 PM, but as early as 9 PM by the end of January.

January 4<sup>th</sup> - Earth and our Sun  are closest as they will be for the entire year, today only. We will be about 1.5 million miles closer to the Sun than average.

 January 5<sup>th</sup> - The moon stars into the face of Taurus, the bull, tonight. It is below the moon as night falls. Look for stars in the shape of a V, which are the horns of the bull. The brightest star is Aldebran, the "orange" eye of the bull.

January 8<sup>th</sup> - The moon  is full as it lines up opposite the Sun in our sky. The full Moon of January is known as the Old Moon, Moon After Yule, or Wolf Moon.



January 12<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup>: It is said that only 1% of the population has seen the planet Mercury. Let's increase the percentage by looking southeast early in the morning, just after sunrise, on the 12<sup>th</sup> - 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Finding Saturn during January** - First, locate the asterism The Big Dipper. Then follow the arc of the handle of the dipper... "Arc to Arcturus" in the handle of Bootes, then "Speed to Spica" in the constellation Virgo. Saturn will appear just underneath the star Spica.

